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FM AMEMBASSY TIRANA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7316  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 3526  
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UNCLAS TIRANA 000585

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (SENSITIVE CAPTION ADDED)

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [AL](#)  
SUBJECT: BERISHA OUTBURST STILL THE TALK OF TIRANA

1. (SBU) One week on, Prime Minister Berisha's July 23 outburst in Parliament - in which he insulted and then threatened to kill opposition MP Taulant Balla in unprintably profane terms - continues to be a major focus of the press, as well as a source of speculation, head scratching and embarrassment for Albania's political class. The early morning rhetorical explosion by Berisha - in response to a Balla reference to Berisha's daughter's political ambitions, nearly resulted in a bench clearing brawl on the Parliament floor, averted only after Balla and his Socialist Party compatriots left the chamber.

2. (SBU) COMMENT: Although profane outbursts by Berisha in Parliament are nothing new, this latest tirade by the PM has shocked even Albania's hardened political class and media, with embarrassment and shame the most commonly heard reactions. Editorials have accused Berisha of damaging Albania's image, while our European colleagues have reported negative reactions from their capitals. Berisha's tantrum has also led to speculation that mounting pressure in the wake of Gerdec and in preparation for next year's parliamentary elections may have finally gotten to Berisha.  
END COMMENT.  
WITHERS